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ABSTRACT

Traditional classroom teaching preparation does not fully prepare faculty for the special requirements of teaching interactive television courses. Faculty who teach these courses often have to update their skills in current technology, plan courses differently, and work with distance education staff to prepare and deliver courses. This paper reviews effective course planning, student learning styles, behavior modification, and teaching effectiveness in distance learning settings. A literature review indicates that faculty development programs seldom exist for interactive television, so discussion formulates a rationale for formal faculty development programs for interactive television programs. Several themes concerning faculty development for interactive television emerged from this review: (1) faculty need skills to adapt their teaching style for interactive television including instructional, personal, and collaborative skills; (2) improvement in teaching interactive television courses requires a formal process of organized training programs; (3) training is beneficial for faculty; (4) teaching and learning in interactive television ought to be a shared experience between faculty and students; (5) faculty need to be aware of how their teaching behavior influences students' learning; (6) interactive television technology is a tool to be used and not an end in itself; (7) for future faculty development efforts, faculty and administrators should answer the following questions: Do all faculty know what good teaching skills are? Can faculty change their course planning to accommodate adult learning styles? Can university administration provide and sustain sufficient support, incentives, and resources for faculty to teach interactive television programs? (Contains 13 references.) (Author/SWC)

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Faculty Development Programs in Interactive Television

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Abstract

Faculty development activities often focus on improving teaching and learning. The paper reviews, first, distance education literature that describes the major teaching and learning issues for faculty development and, second, describes a rationale for formal faculty development programs for interactive television programs.

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Faculty development activities often focus on improving teaching and learning. The literature on interactive television and distance education describes skills and knowledge that faculty should have in order to teach well, including skills in effective course planning, using computer and multimedia technologies, and evaluating student performance and knowledge of appropriate instructional methods; the importance of interaction between faculty and students; students' learning styles, behavior, and motivation; and the roles of distance education staff. Faculty development also includes broader issues, e.g., commitment from university administration to support faculty development, sensitivity to faculty needs and financial and staff resources to support an institution's interactive television program. This paper will, first, review distance education literature that describes the major teaching and learning issues for faculty development and, second, describe a rationale for formal faculty development programs for interactive television programs.

Current Faculty Development Efforts in Interactive Television

In a traditional classroom setting, faculty usually work by themselves to prepare their courses. In class, faculty teach and students learn face-to-face. However, faculty who teach interactive television courses often have to update their skills in current technology, plan courses differently, and work with distance education staff to prepare and deliver courses. The literature on faculty development for distance education deals with several major teaching and learning issues. The literature describes many different facets which practitioners and researchers have studied; apparently, however, no typical faculty development program for interactive television exists. A brief review of some of the major areas for faculty development in distance education follows.

Effective Course Planning

In planning instruction for distance teaching, faculty did not have procedural planning skills (e.g., lesson and curriculum planning skills), did not make assessments of their students, and did not know how students learn (Wolcott, 1993). "The instructional design of the course was driven by a preoccupation with *what* to teach" (p. 29). Faculty were thorough planners and approached planning based largely on their experience in teaching. In planning instruction for a distance education setting, faculty engaged in course or term planning (comprehensive planning) from general to specific, identifying course content first and methodology second. Faculty focused on selection and sequence by defining the content and then matching the content with available time. Because content drove course development, students were a low priority in planning instruction.

Gehlauf, Shatz, and Frye (1991) studied the differences between faculty's instructional methods in a regular classroom setting and those used in interactive television. After faculty learned about their distance education environment, many realized that there were limitations (e.g., reduced spontaneity) and that interaction with students was important. The interactive television setting required faculty to reassess their instructional methods and overall course planning. Egan, Sebastian, Welch, Page, Nkabinde, and Jones (1993) stated in their discussion of preparation and planning, "As a rule, instructors thought that the preparation for teaching on television was far more time and effort intensive than preparing for conventional teaching" (p. J-2).

Flannery (1991) discussed adults' expectations of instructors and the learning style preferences of part-time adult students who were resuming their graduate education. Flannery concluded "... that adults expected an instructor-centered classroom" (p. 40); "... students expressed a high preference for clearly organized coursework and specific information on expectations, assignments, and course requirements," (p. 41); and that faculty need collaborative skills which "can be defined as those qualities which facilitate satisfying both the needs of the

instructor and the needs of the learner for pursuing professional knowledge and applied interests" (p. 42).

To summarize briefly, effective course planning emphasizes how instructional methods correspond to students' learning styles. Students' characteristics and needs should be a stronger focus when faculty plan their distance education courses than appears to be the case.

Student Learning Styles, Behavior, and Motivation

As the teaching environment changes for interactive television faculty, students experience a similar shift in their learning environment. These shifts affect students' learning style, behavior and motivation. For example, Cunningham and McLemore (1994) looked at the effects of interrelationships among students and faculty, as well as student motivation in distance learning classes. Students' attitudes toward learning are influenced by teachers' "immediacy behaviors," a communication research term used by distance learning researchers. Immediacy behaviors include a faculty member's personal and instructional skills. For example, faculty should show enthusiasm for their subject, display humor when appropriate, demonstrate that they are students of technology, develop rapport with students, respond to student needs (e.g., favorable comments for students' work), and learn students' names. Cunningham and McLemore also concluded that technology should work properly; "... it should not impose significant restrictions on the learner" (p. 11).

Egan et al. (1992) described how faculty found solutions to problems with student interaction. Some faculty established discussion groups which allowed students to interact with each other. A few faculty worked with study groups.

> Discussion groups provided instructors and telecourse students with periodic opportunities for face-to-face interaction which is more typical of conventional teaching. Additionally, these groups (e.g., discussion groups) gave instructors opportunities to assess the degree to which their instruction impacted their students' thinking and behavior (p. J-4).

Barker and Dickson (1994) stated that students' interaction with faculty is important. Students need access to faculty outside of class, feedback on assignments and grades, and a sense of group cohension in the class. Moore, Burton, and Dodl (1991) stated that technology was not a product, but part of a process to deliver instruction.

Faculty surveyed by Egan et al. (1992) cited the important link facilitators at off-campus sites provide. "[Facilitators] contribute to the emotional and psychological well-being of students whom they serve" (p. J-4). Facilitators are local contacts for a course, faculty, and the institution. Research by Cunningham and McLemore (1994) found that student achievement is enhanced by interaction with facilitators because facilitators manage the logistics. This is in turn gives instructors more time to focus on instruction. The role of a classroom facilitator at the college level will vary depending upon the instructional methods of the faculty, the level of a course, the number and level of students at the site, the type of transmission system used, and facilitators' assigned duties.

Teaching Effectiveness

A recurring theme in the literature on teaching effectiveness relates to personal and instructional skills in a traditional setting and in a distance education setting. Concerns about quality of instruction, unfamiliarity with distance learning, and misperceptions of the use and benefit of technologies are key issues (Gunawardena, 1990). "Training will break down feelings of insecurity and fear of the new technology; faculty will also learn to use the television medium effectively" (p. 42). A key benefit of training is that it allows faculty to remain in charge of instruction in the classroom. Similar conclusions were drawn by Egan et al. (1992). For example,

the availability of an instructional designer and production and technical staff support was instrumental in faculty's feeling comfortable teaching on television. Faculty should become familiar with and practice with equipment well before their course starts; issues of pedagogy should be addressed, and faculty should know what system support is available (e.g., what facilitators at off-campus sites and production staff can do) and how to handle class when technical problems occur (Gehlauf, Shatz, and Frye, 1991).

To teach effectively, faculty should be aware of their own teaching behaviors in an interactive television environment. Barker and Dickson (1994) wrote that distance education faculty should be master teachers, have good presentation skills, and exhibit teaching skills found in the literature on teaching. Teache ; need to look at new ways to plan and teach their courses. The Egan et al. (1992) summation on quality television instruction provides an excellent overview of teaching effectiveness:

> [The critical factors in distance education] include competent instructors who are skilled in content knowledge as well as presentation skills; meaningful and timely interactivity that occurs among and between students, facilitators and instructors, learning support materials that foster engagement and interactivity; effective collaboration between and among instructors, course designers, and producers which culminates in visually interesting and instructionally relevant course sessions; careful integration of multimedia (e.g., video segments, films, graphics, etc.) which capitalizes on the strengths of television as a medium; and instruction that is responsive to students needs and produces positive student outcomes. (p. J-6).

Integrating visual materials with planned instruction to enhance teaching and student learning is an important aspect. For faculty teaching television courses, Egan et al (1993) found from their survey of instructors that "this training [in using visual materials] also created a greater awareness about the importance of selecting as well as preparing appropriate visuals (slides, video segments, etc.) for television teaching" (p. J-2). Faculty realized the limitations of routine lectures and found that audio-visuals enhanced their teaching effectiveness for interactive television (Gehlauf, Shatz, and Frye (1991).

Rationale for Formal Faculty Development for Interactive Television

Formal faculty development programs for distance education require institution-wide support for both faculty development and distance education from top administration. Higher education institutions have changed greatly in response to changes in students' needs and the federal government's efforts to increase access to higher education (Gaff and Justice, 1978). A huge increase in the diversity of students attending college for the first time has resulted in a demand for new programs and an expanded curriculum. Faculty development is an important method to accommodate any change caused by students, society, or federally mandated programs for education. "[Faculty development] was a means for reordering priorities within departments or across the entire institutions" (p. 86). Programs were established that focused on innovative approaches to teaching, advising and evaluation. Freedman, et al. (1978) observed that "No faculty development program can take place unless faculty members themselves want it" (p. 155).

Reasons for formal faculty development programs include: 1) to help faculty to adapt to new technology; 2) to review or renew emphasis on how students learn and the instructional methods faculty can use; 3) to draw upon distance education faculty's expertise to work with new faculty; 4) to tie distance education to an institution's educational and outreach missions, which should enhance the institution's posture in the educational community; 5) to show employees what resources are available for distance education; and 6) to provide a learning environment for students that is comparable to a traditional classroom setting. The last objective may be the most

difficult to achieve because of different perceptions faculty hold about teaching, student-centered learning, and how distance education students learn, especially adult learners.

An institution's attitude toward faculty development strongly correlates with an institution's sense of accountability for student learning and improvement in teaching.

> Distance education revolves around a learner-centered system with teaching activity focused on facilitating learning. The teacher augments prepared study materials by providing explanations, references, and reinforcements for the student. Independent study stresses learning, rather than teaching, and is based on the principles that the key to learning is what students do, not what teachers do. It is a highly personalized process that converts newly acquired information into new insights and ideas. The institution's function, and the task of its instructional personnel, is to facilitate and enhance that process – despite the distance – to achieve optimum learning outcomes. (Beaudoin, 1990, p. 21)

Institutional Commitment

Because of state and federal support, Barker & Dickson (1994) believed that distance education is not a passing fad. "Due to an increase in distance education and its acceptability, administrators must deal with new issues and demands" (p. J-6). One issue cited is addressing faculty needs, including their adaptation to distance learning. For example, administrators should provide incentives such as extra compensation or extra consideration in promotion and tenure process for faculty who teach distance education courses (Gunawardena, 1990; Barker and Dickson, 1994). Administrators should also understand that teaching on television requires additional time for preparation and for visiting off-campus sites; they should make adjustments in faculty work loads to compensate. Usually emphasis within the institution is placed first on television hardware, and "the unfortunate side effect is that attention to the proper training and orienting programs often comes after the system is being used" (Gehlauf, Shatz, and Frye, 1991, p. 27).

Faculty development programs require institution-wide support with funds to sustain programs (Gaff and Justice, 1978). For an example that applies to distance education, Barker and Dickson (1994) described Western Illinois University's Faculty Development Technology Laboratory. "If faculty are expected to teach with new technologies, they must be provided with a proper facility and state-of-the art equipment and software to develop and produce instructional materials" (p. J-8). Only faculty have access to the laboratory at WIU and the types of state-of-the-art equipment available.

Five essential factors were identified by Olcott (1993) for universities and colleges that want faculty to participate in telecommunication systems: training, instructional support, extra compensation, adjusted teaching loads, and positive effect on promotion and tenure. To integrate telecommunication systems in extended degree programs, "... an institution's efforts to facilitate faculty adoption, establish instructional support services, and create an incentives infrastructure that formally recognizes faculty participation are crucial to the effective use of technology in extended degree programs" (p. 22). To encourage faculty to become capable at teaching distance education courses, Beaudoin (1990) stated that training programs "..must offer convincing, no-nonsense and on-going training that deals with how to teach at a distance, not merely how to manipulate new instructional technology" (p. 27). Also, top administration must provide leadership to "... to overcome resource limitations, remove structural constraints, and combat attitudinal barriers" (p. 27).

Summary

Several themes concerning faculty development for interactive television emerged from this review: 1) faculty need skills to adapt their teaching style for interactive television including instructional, personal, and collaborative skills; 2) improvement in teaching interactive television

courses requires a formal process of organized training programs; 3) training is beneficial for faculty; 4) teaching and learning in interactive television ought to be a shared experience between faculty and students; 5) faculty need to be aware of how their teaching behavior influences students' learning; 6) interactive television technology is a tool to be used and not an end in itself; 7) for future faculty development efforts, faculty and administrators should answer the following questions: Do all faculty know what good teaching skills are? Can faculty change their course planning to accommodate adults' learning styles? Can top university administration provide and sustain sufficient support, incentives, and resources for faculty to teach interactive television programs?

Areas for further study include defining the role and components of formal faculty development programs for interactive television. For example, interactive television faculty, staff, and administrators could define and evaluate the type(s) of institutional support already available at their institution and project any other support that may be needed.

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